

## **STATE OF THE CITY**

**GOOD MORNING EVERYONE. LET ME BEGIN BY SAYING THAT IT IS AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE AS THE MAYOR OF MIAMI BEACH TO PRESENT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS. IN MY THIRD YEAR AS MAYOR, THAT HONOR AND PRIVILEGE HAS BEEN JOINED IN 2004 WITH THE VERY GOOD NEWS THAT OUR CITY IS DOING EXTREMELY WELL.**

**NOT JUST IN OUR CURRENT FINANCIAL STANDING, BUT ALSO WITH A BROAD-BASED AND DIVERSE COMMUNITY THAT IS WORKING TOGETHER TO BUILD FOR AN EVEN BRIGHTER FUTURE.**

**THERE'S ALSO BEEN A CHANGE IN ATTITUDE FROM THIS GOVERNMENT TOWARDS THE PUBLIC FROM JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, WHEN LACK OF RESPECT AND DISCOURSE SEEMED TO CARRY A HEAVY BURDEN AT JUST ABOUT EVERY MEETING. THERE'S A NEW ATTITUDE OF RESPECT, NOT JUST FROM THE GOVERNMENT TO THE PUBLIC, BUT ALSO ON THE DAIS.**

**THE COMMISSION IS WORKING WELL TOGETHER. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE SOME POLITICAL DIFFERENCES AND CHALLENGES WITHIN THE COMMISSION AND ADMINISTRATION, BUT AT THE END OF**

**THE DAY, IT USUALLY SHAKES OUT PRETTY WELL. THAT'S A GOOD THING. I'M PROUD OF THIS COMMISSION.**

**ALWAYS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE MAYOR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS IS TO REPORT TO ALL OF YOU ON THE FINANCIAL HEALTH OF MIAMI BEACH, WHERE OUR POSITION AND STATUS AS THE ECONOMIC ENGINE OF MIAMI-DADE IS OFTEN THE MEASURE AND STANDARD FOR THE ENTIRE REGION. NOT JUST WITH OUR TOURISM AND BUSINESS LEVEL INDICATORS, BUT IN OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR OUR RESIDENTS. IT'S ALWAYS A TWO-PRONGED APPROACH AND CHALLENGE FOR A SUCCESSFUL CITY: MAINTAINING A STRONG, PRO-BUSINESS ECONOMY WHILE PROTECTING THE INTERESTS OF OUR RESIDENTS.**

**IT'S A TOUGH ACT TO BALANCE AT TIMES, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS CLASH WITH THE RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY. IT'S A DEVELOPING DYNAMIC THAT HAPPENS IN MANY WAYS WITH A SUCCESSFUL AND GROWING CITY.**

**BUT MANY OF THOSE CHALLENGES ARE ALSO FILLED WITH JUST AS MANY OPPORTUNITIES, AND THIS MAYOR AND THIS COMMISSION ARE WORKING TOGETHER TO MOVE THOSE DIFFICULT CHALLENGES INTO THE MANY POSITIVE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL STRENGTHEN OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND GIVE OUR RESIDENTS**

**THE BEST HOMETOWN TO LIVE, TO RAISE FAMILIES, AND TO ENJOY ALL THAT MIAMI BEACH HAS TO OFFER.**

**WHERE WE'VE BEEN AS A CITY, WHERE WE ARE TODAY AND WHERE WE ARE GOING FROM JUST THREE YEARS AGO, CAN BE MEASURED WITH REAL FACTS, REAL NUMBERS AND THE WAY WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES. AS I LOOK AROUND THIS CHAMBER, THE OPTIMISM AND HOW WE FEEL ABOUT OURSELVES IS VERY REAL.**

**IN MIAMI BEACH, WE HAVE EXPERIENCED A RAPID, ALMOST MIRACULOUS RECOVERY FROM THE TRAGIC EVENTS OF SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>. WE ARE AT A LEVEL OF SUCCESS TODAY THAT HAS EVEN SURPASSED THE GUARDED OPTIMISM THAT ALL OF US HAD HOPED WE COULD REACH THROUGH 2003 AND NOW INTO 2004.**

**HOW HAVE WE DONE? WELL, THE FIRST FISCAL QUARTER OF 2004 MAY PROVE TO BE THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BEGINNING OF ANY YEAR IN THE CITY'S HISTORY. THAT'S NO SMALL ACHIEVEMENT IN A COUNTRY THAT'S STILL REELING ITSELF IN FROM A FIVE-YEAR SLOWDOWN IN THE NATIONAL ECONOMY.**

**THAT OPTIMISM AND FAITH IN OURSELVES IS NOT JUST FROM ANY FEEL GOOD POLITICAL RHETORIC, IT'S THE REAL STUFF, THE REAL NUMBERS, THE REAL PHYSICAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS WE ARE SEEING MORE AND MORE AROUND US CITYWIDE. THE EXCITING AND HIGHLY CREATIVE PRIVATE AND**

**PUBLIC INVESTMENTS: IT'S ALL REAL AND ITS ALL THERE FOR EVERYONE TO SEE.**

**OUR RESORT TAX COLLECTIONS CLOSED THE FISCAL YEAR WITH A RECORD \$24,670,000. THAT'S A \$3.3 MILLION INCREASE; AND WHY IS THAT SO IMPRESSIVE? IT'S ONE MILLION DOLLARS MORE, OR A 4% INCREASE OVER THE PREVIOUS RECORD, WHICH HAD BEEN SET JUST PRIOR TO SEPTEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup> IN 2001. WE'RE DOING SOMETHING RIGHT.**

**AND EVERYONE ON THIS DAIS, CITY EMPLOYEES, THE POLICE AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS, PARKS AND RECREATION AND PUBLIC WORKS HAVE ALL CONTRIBUTED TO THAT SUCCESS. IT'S NICE OF COURSE TO CREDIT GOVERNMENT, BUT WITHOUT THIS CITY'S SAVVY, DIVERSE AND GROWING RESIDENTIAL BASE THAT'S REALLY KEPT OUR FEET TO THE FIRE, WE WOULDN'T BE NEARLY WHERE WE ARE.**

**WITH OUR FINANCIAL SECURITY, WE'VE HAD THE LUXURY TO FOCUS, SET OUR VISION, AND TO INVEST IN A WIDE ARRAY OF IDEAS AND PROJECTS TO BETTER OUR QUALITY OF LIFE IN THE BROADEST SENSE.**

**FROM INVESTING RESOURCES INTO ART AND CULTURE; TO DELIVERING THE PROMISE OF THE NEWEST STATE OF THE ART PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO SYSTEM; TO IMPROVING ALL OF OUR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS AND PARKS; BUILDING A BEACHWALK FOR ALL RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO ENJOY; A CONCERTED EFFORT**

**TO CONTINUALLY IMPROVE THE NORTH END OF THE CITY, WHICH IS FAST BECOMING ONE OF THE NEWEST "IN PLACES" IN ALL OF THE COUNTY; TO OPENING ONE OF THE FINEST PUBLIC ICE SKATING FACILITIES AND GOLF COURSES IN SOUTH FLORIDA.**

**EVERY DAY WE'RE CELEBRATING A RIBBON CUTTING OR SHOWING OFF OURSELVES TO THE REST OF THE WORLD AS A DYNAMIC AND BEAUTIFUL CITY THAT'S ATTRACTING THE MOST EXCITING FESTIVALS TO FURTHER ESTABLISH MIAMI BEACH AS ONE OF THE LEADING BEACHFRONT RESORT DESTINATIONS.**

**AM I PROUD TO BE THE MAYOR OF MIAMI BEACH ON ITS 89<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY? YOU BET I AM.**

**INTO MY THIRD YEAR AS YOUR MAYOR, NEARLY THREE BILLION DOLLARS IN NEW RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL PROJECTS HAS BEEN INVESTED IN MIAMI BEACH. THAT INCLUDES ALMOST 1000 NEW HOTEL ROOMS REPRESENTING SOME OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PROPERTIES YOU'LL FIND ANYWHERE.**

**AT THE SAME TIME, WE'VE CONTINUED A THREE-YEAR MILLAGE REDUCTION WHILE INCREASING OUR GENERAL FUND BALANCE. AND ANYONE WHO HAS INVESTED IN OUR CITY WITH JUST ONE CONDOMINIUM UNIT WILL TELL YOU WHAT A GREAT INVESTMENT THAT'S BEEN. AND WE'RE JUST GETTING STARTED.**

**AS THE CITY MANAGER TOLD THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN A RECENT BREAKFAST FORUM, OUR CREDIT RATING AS A CITY HAS**

**NEVER BEEN STRONGER OR HIGHER, WITH TWO UPGRADES JUST WITHIN THE CURRENT FISCAL YEAR. THAT'S THE REAL STUFF. THOSE ARE REAL NUMBERS. NO NEED FOR ANY POLITICIAN'S FEEL-GOOD RHETORIC TODAY.**

**TO RECOGNIZE EVERYONE THAT'S CONTRIBUTED TO OUR FINANCIAL SUCCESS, IN BOTH THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR WOULD TAKE US THROUGH MOST OF THE DAY. BUT I DO WANT TO RECOGNIZE FIRST, THE CHAIRMAN OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE, COMMISSIONER JOSE SMITH. JOSE, THANK YOU FOR YOUR LEADERSHIP IN WORKING WITH THE ADMINISTRATION, THE CITY'S FINANCE AND LEGAL DEPARTMENTS, AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC. YOU'VE NAVIGATED US THROUGH MANY OF THE COMPLEX ISSUES THAT CONFRONT OUR ACTIVE AND SUCCESSFUL CITY.**

**AND TO OUR FINANCE DIRECTOR TRISH WALKER AND ALSO TO HER STAFF, THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR PROFESSIONALISM AND COURAGE TO TELL US WHEN WE'RE STEPPING DOWN A LITTLE TOO HARD ON THAT PEDAL OF SPENDING. THERE'S SO MUCH STILL TO ACCOMPLISH THROUGHOUT THE CITY, AND EVERY NOW AND THEN YOU HAVE TO WAVE US BACK INTO THE SPEED LIMIT. YOUR CANDOR IS ALWAYS APPRECIATED.**

**AND TO THE CITY'S BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE, PARTICULARLY AS WE HEAD INTO THE SEASON OF TACKLING FUNDING PRIORITIES, NEVER AN EASY TASK FOR THIS COMMISSION.**

**I WOULD LIKE TO RECOGNIZE, DEEDEE WEITHORNE, THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE BUDGET ADVISORY COMMITTEE. YOU AND YOUR COMMITTEE PROVIDE AN ENORMOUS SERVICE TO THIS CITY, AND I LOOK FORWARD TO YOUR COMMITTEE'S INPUT IN THE COMING MONTHS.**

**IF YOU LOOK AROUND THE CITY, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO ARGUE THAT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS NOT ALIVE AND WELL IN MIAMI BEACH. SOME MAY EVEN SAY THAT WE SHOULD SLOW IT DOWN A LITTLE. BUT LET'S NOT ARGUE TOO HARD WITH THAT SUCCESS.**

**LET'S FACE IT. MORE AND MORE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE AND DO BUSINESS HERE. AND FROM THE QUALITY OF THE NEWER RESIDENTS AND THE NEWER BUSINESSES THAT HAVE COME TO MIAMI BEACH IN JUST THE PAST FEW YEARS, I BELIEVE WE'RE A BETTER CITY FOR IT.**

**ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER CHRISTINA CUERVO, KEVIN CROWDER AND THEIR STAFFS...ALL DESERVE TO BE RECOGNIZED TODAY FOR THEIR EFFORTS.**

**DEVELOPING A POPULAR CITY THE RIGHT WAY IS A GREAT CHALLENGE, AND CHRISTINA AND KEVIN, YOU'VE MET THAT CHALLENGE.**

**WHILE MOVING FORWARD AS POSSIBLY THE MOST FINANCIALLY SUCCESSFUL CITY IN THE STATE, WE HAVE ALSO RE-ESTABLISHED MIAMI BEACH AS A LEADER IN THE FILM, TELEVISION**

**AND MODELING INDUSTRIES. WE ARE ONCE AGAIN A PRIME LOCATION.**

**I CERTAINLY WANT TO COMMEND OUR CITY MANAGER JORGE GONZALEZ, FOR HIS EXCELLENT MANAGEMENT OF OUR CITY'S WORKFORCE. HE HAS STRIVED TO OBTAIN THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF EFFICIENCY AND PROFESSIONALISM.**

**THIS COMMISSION, ALONG WITH THE MANAGER ARE EQUALLY COMMITTED TO ART AND CULTURE. THAT COMMITMENT STRETCHES FROM THE RENOVATIONS OF THE BYRON CARLYLE THEATER IN NORTH BEACH; THE COLONY THEATER; THE CULTURAL CAMPUS WITH ITS NEW REGIONAL LIBRARY; THE WOLFSONIAN; THE JEWISH MUSEUM; THE ALWAYS IMPROVING BOTANICAL GARDEN; AND THE BASS MUSEUM, TO NAME JUST A FEW.**

**ONE PROPOSAL FOR THE FUTURE THE COMMISSION HAS MOVED FORWARD ON IS THE EXPANSION OF THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY, WITH ITS INNOVATIVE AND STATE OF THE ART SOUNDSPACE PROJECT. THIS PROJECT HAS THE POTENTIAL OF BEING A KEY COMPONENT IN DEFINING MIAMI BEACH AS A WORLD-CLASS CULTURAL DESTINATION WHILE ALSO BRINGING GREAT BENEFITS TO OUR RESIDENTS.**

**HELPING TO GUIDE MIAMI BEACH IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION IS THE CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL, A GROUP OF CITIZEN VOLUNTEERS WHO HAVE DEDICATED COUNTLESS HOURS TOWARDS LIFTING AND DEFINING MIAMI BEACH. OUR CITY IS NOT ONLY A CULTURAL**

**DESTINATION, BUT ONE THAT CARES ABOUT ITS NUMEROUS LOCAL GROUPS IN PROVIDING FUNDING AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTINUE TO SHOWCASE ARTISTIC CREATIVITY.**

**THIS COMMISSION HAS DEMONSTRATED A STRONG COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS.**

**THERE'S A UNANIMOUS SENTIMENT TOWARD THE CREATION OF A DEDICATED FUNDING SOURCE, AND TO THE MANAGER'S CREDIT, HE HAS DEVELOPED A FORMULA WITH QUALITY OF LIFE DOLLARS THAT HAS THE ABILITY TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN. THERE STILL NEEDS TO BE SOME FINE-TUNING WITH THE PROCESS TO ENSURE A FAIRNESS WITH THOSE DOLLARS, AND THIS COMMISSION IS WORKING HARD TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.**

**LET'S GIVE A HAND TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CULTURAL ARTS COUNCIL. ON BEHALF OF THE COMMISSION AND ENTIRE CITY, THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIRELESS EFFORTS. BECAUSE OF YOU, WE EVEN SOUND BETTER AS A CITY. ART AND CULTURE IS OUR CITY'S SOUL AND RHYTHM.**

**CREATIVITY AND TALENT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IN THE FOREFRONT OF MIAMI BEACH THAN IT IS TODAY. LET'S MEET SOME SPECIAL PEOPLE WHO ARE MAKING THAT HAPPEN.**

**LITTLE DID WE KNOW LAST YEAR, THAT A LOCAL CARDIOLOGIST WORKING OUT OF MOUNT SINAI HOSPITAL, WOULD BECOME KNOWN WORLD WIDE AS THE DIET DOCTOR EXTRORDINAIRE.... I'M TALKING**

**ABOUT THE SOUTH BEACH DIET DOCTOR, AND MIAMI BEACH  
RESIDENT, DOCTOR ARTHUR AGATSTON.**

**IT ALL BEGAN WHEN THE CARDIOLOGIST SET OUT TO DESIGN A DIET  
FOR HIS PATIENTS. THE NEWS OF HIS PATIENTS' DRAMATIC  
SUCCESES SOON BECAME THE TOPIC OF MORE MEDIA REPORTS  
THAN ANY OF US, ESPECIALLY DR. AGATSTON COULD HAVE EVER  
IMAGINED.**

**TODAY, A BOOK EXPLAINING HIS DIET AND NEW "WAY OF LIFE"-- IS  
THE NEW YORK TIMES NUMBER ONE BEST SELLER.**

**DR. AGATSON—YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEOPLE ALL OVER THE  
WORLD ARE SALUTED HERE TODAY. THANK YOU FOR GIVING PEOPLE  
A NEW, EFFECTIVE EASY WAY TO LIVE—AND FOR ACTING AS A GREAT  
GOOD WILL AMBASSADOR FOR OUR CITY.**

**OUR NEXT HONOREE IS A SELF DESCRIBED "IMPOVERISHED CHILD  
FROM BRAZIL"AND ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS POP-CULTURE  
ARTISTS WHOSE WORK CONTINUES TO PUT OUR CITY IN THE  
INTERNATIONAL LIME LIGHT. ROMERO BRITTO, PLEASE STAND.**

**IN THE BEGINNING OF HIS CAREER, THIS DETERMINED PASSIONATE  
ARTIST USED TO PAINT IMAGES ON SCRAPS OF CARDBOARD AND  
NEWSPAPER. AND TODAY, HIS ART WORK DECORATES THE HOMES OF  
MANY CELEBRITIES.**

**CURRENTLY, IN ADDITON TO YOUR GALLERY ON LINCOLN ROAD,  
YOUR WORK IS DISPLAYED NATIONWIDE IN OVER 140 GALLERIES.**

**THERE IS A PART OF YOU, YOUR DETERMINATION AND COMMITMENT IN SO MUCH OF THE ART WE ALL ENJOY.... AND I'D LIKE TO THINK THAT THERE IS A PART OF MIAMI BEACH IN ALL OF YOUR SUCCESS AS WELL.**

**TODAY WE CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS. YOU MAKE US ALL PROUD.**

**OUR NIGHTLIFE ALSO CONTINUES TO ATTRACT THOUSANDS OF VISITORS EVERY WEEK WHILE OUR SPECIAL EVENTS, SUCH AS THE RECENT WINE AND FOOD FESTIVAL AND THE WORLD-RENOWNED ART BASEL, HAVE DISTINGUISHED MIAMI BEACH AS ONE OF THE FEW ELITE CITIES IN AMERICA THAT CAN TRULY ATTRACT THE BEST. THE BOTTOM LINE IS: WE'RE JUST A PLACE EVERYONE WANTS TO BE.**

**I WANT TO RECOGNIZE A FEW PEOPLE WHO HAVE HELPED TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN: DOUG TOBER FROM SMG, BILL TALBERT FROM THE GREATER MIAMI AND CONVENTION BUREAU, BOB GOODMAN REPRESENTING ART BASEL, IAN SHRAGER FROM THE WINE AND FOOD FESTIVAL, MIAMI DESIGN PRESERVATION LEAGUE'S MICHAEL KINERK, HENRY CRESPO, AND THE ENTIRE BLACK HOST COMMITTEE, AND FROM OUR SPECIAL EVENTS OFFICE, MAX SKLAR.**

**IT'S BEEN AN EXCITING YEAR. MIAMI BEACH HAS JOINED WITH OTHER MUNICIPALITIES AND THE COUNTY IN TRYING TO BRING THE SECRETARIAT'S OFFICE OF THE FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS**

**TO MIAMI. TO MANY IT WOULD BE A BOOST TO THE AREA'S ECONOMY AND A GENERATOR OF NEW JOBS.**

**WHILE IT'S BEEN SOMEWHAT CONTROVERSIAL, LET'S GIVE COMMISSIONER LUIS GARCIA A HAND FOR ALL OF HIS EFFORTS IN HELPING TO MOVE THAT FORWARD. I HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF CONFIDENCE IN THE WORK THAT LUIS IS PUTTING INTO THE FTAA, AND SHOULD IT COME TO FRUITION, WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF THE WAY HE HAS REPRESENTED THIS CITY. ALONG WITH COMMISSIONER GARCIA'S WORK IN PUBLIC SAFETY HE HAS BEEN A LEADER JOINING WITH COMMISSIONER GROSS AND RONNIE SINGER IN OUR CITY'S EFFORT TO BATTLE CANCER WITH OUR SUPPORT OF THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY'S RELAY FOR LIFE EVENT. I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT NO CITY HAS RAISED AS MUCH MONEY FOR THE AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY IN IT'S FIRST YEAR AS THE CITY OF MIAMI BEACH DID.**

**VOLUNTEERISM IN PUBLIC SERVICE, THE GIVING OF ONE'S VALUABLE TIME TO SERVE ON OUR BOARDS AND COMMITTEES, HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE KEYS TO OUR SUCCESSES.**

**AS A COLLECTIVE AND DIVERSE GROUP OF CITIZENS, YOUR EVER-EXPANDING CHARGE, FROM HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DESIGN REVIEW, TO PARKS AND RECREATION, POLICE RELATIONS, ISSUES REGARDING HOMELESSNESS, TO OVERSEEING NUMEROUS PUBLIC PROJECTS, YOUR ROLE AS ADVISORS TO THE**

**ADMINISTRATION AND COMMISSION HAS BEEN INVALUABLE. OUR CITY'S GREATEST RESOURCE IS ITS PEOPLE.**

**ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A FEW MINUTES TO RECOGNIZE AND THANK A NUMBER OF CITIZENS WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED SO GREATLY TO THE BETTERMENT OF OUR CITY. YOUR EFFORTS HAVE HELPED TO ELEVATE MIAMI BEACH TO AN EVEN BETTER PLACE.**

**I'D LIKE TO RECOGNIZE CERTAIN BOARD AND COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS WHO SHARE SO MUCH OF THEIR VALUABLE TIME WITH US. FROM THE PLANNING BOARD, VICTOR DIAZ, DESIGN REVIEW BOARD, GREGORY NEVILLE, ZONING BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT, NELI SANTAMARINA, NORTH BEACH YOUTH CENTER OVERSIGHT AND THE CONVENTION CENTER ADVISORY BOARD, JOE FONTANA, HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD, MITCH NOVIK, FROM THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN, DIANNA SUSI, FROM THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION COMMITTEE, MARTHA MONTANER, AND, FROM POLICE CITIZEN RELATIONS, MIKE FINESILVER.**

**I'VE HAD THE PRIVILEGE TO SERVE AS CHAIR OF OUR GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND OVERSIGHT BOARD. THERE'S BEEN NO OTHER BOARD IN THE CITY'S HISTORY THAT HAS BEEN SO ACTIVE IN SCRUTINIZING THE CITY'S PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS.**

**DURING LAST YEAR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS, I ANNOUNCED THE CREATION OF A BLUE RIBBON PANEL TO**

**INVESTIGATE THE ONGOING PROBLEM OF DEMOLITION OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES IN MIAMI BEACH AND TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THIS COMMISSION ABOUT HOW WE CAN SOLVE THIS PROBLEM.**

**THE FINAL REPORT WAS DELIVERED TWO WEEKS AGO TO THE COMMISSION, AND THIS PAST WEDNESDAY WE FORWARDED THAT REPORT TO THE PLANNING BOARD FOR THEIR REVIEW.**

**I BELIEVED A YEAR AGO AND, BECAUSE OF RECENT EVENTS, CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE PROTECTION OF OUR HISTORIC STRUCTURES WILL BE ONE OF THE MORE DIFFICULT CHALLENGES THIS COMMUNITY WILL FACE IN THE COMING YEARS.**

**THE REPORT IS OUTSTANDING, ONE OF THE BEST THAT'S COME ACROSS MY DESK, AND A REAL TRIBUTE TO THE PANEL MEMBERS WHO HAVE DEDICATED COUNTLESS HOURS OF HARD WORK.**

**WHILE WE CAN TAKE GREAT PRIDE IN EVERYTHING NEW AND HOW WELL WE ARE DOING IN MIAMI BEACH, WE MUST STRIVE TO BETTER PROTECT OUR VALUABLE HISTORIC STRUCTURES. THESE BUILDINGS WITH THEIR UNIQUE ARCHITECTURE, NOT ONLY DISTINGUISHES MIAMI BEACH AS A SPECIAL PLACE, BUT ALSO PRESERVES OUR HERITAGE.**

**THIS YEAR-LONG MISSION BY THE BLUE RIBBON PANEL, PERHAPS ONE OF THE MORE DIFFICULT TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY ANY COMMITTEE, PARTICULARLY WITH ITS HIGHLY TECHNICAL CHALLENGES, HAS PRODUCED A REPORT THAT COULD PROVE TO BE**

**THE BLUEPRINT FOR BETTER PROTECTING OUR CITY'S PAST AND THEREFORE OUR FUTURE.**

**ON BEHALF OF MY COLLEAGUES AND THE ENTIRE CITY, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIRELESS EFFORTS AND A REPORT THAT REFLECTS THAT COMMITMENT.**

**AT OUR LAST MEETING, THE COMMISSION ACCEPTED THE REPORT AND UNANIMOUSLY AGREED TO SEND IT THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE ADVISORY BOARDS AND COMMITTEES.**

**PLEASE STAND AND BE RECOGNIZED, MITCH NOVIK, THE CHAIRMAN, AND MEMBERS TED BERMAN, PABLO CEJAS, ARNOLD GOLDMAN, MIKE KINERK, STEVE LEVINSON, SCOTT ROBINS, MANUEL TARACIDO AND MARJORIE WEBER. FROM THE CITY, THANKS TO PHIL AZAN, MOHAMMED PARTOVI, JERRY GOODKIN, JORGE GOMEZ, WILLIAM CAREY AND TOM MOONEY.**

**THERE'S ALSO BEEN A FEW WHISPERS FROM THE WORLD WITHIN THIS PANEL THAT AN EXTRA DOLLOP OF THANKS SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO JERRY GOODKIN, WHO HAS GONE THE EXTRA MILE IN KEEPING EVERYONE ORGANIZED. THANKS JERRY. AND LET'S NOT FORGET THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT. THANK YOU GARY HELD.**

**WHILE WE ARE TOSSING A FEW ACCOLADES, LET ME TURN TO THE COMMISSION, AND RICHARD STEINBERG: RICHARD, YOU DESERVE TO BE COMMENDED FOR REPRESENTING MIAMI BEACH IN THE WAY YOU HAVE, PARTICULARLY IN WORKING WITH OUR STATE**

**LEGISLATORS IN MATTERS THAT WILL IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY. YOUR CONSTANT VIGILANCE IN LOOKING AT THE PARKING NEEDS OF OUR CITY IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.**

**AND YOU ALSO DESERVE A TIP OF THE HAT FOR THE TIME AND EFFORT YOU HAVE PUT INTO DISSECTING A FEW OF OUR CONTRACTS AND DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENTS, MOST NOTABLY THE PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE NEW WORLD SYMPHONY.**

**AND RICHARD HAS ALSO REPRESENTED THE CITY WITH DISTINCTION ON BOTH THE MIAMI-DADE HOMELESS TRUST AND FLORIDA LEAGUE OF CITIES. THANK YOU RICHARD AS WELL, FOR BEING A STRONG PROPONENT OF THE BIG BROTHERS AND BIG SISTERS PROGRAM.**

**AND MATTI BOWER, WHERE DO I BEGIN. FROM SERVING THE CITY WITH DISTINCTION AS A COMMISSIONER, TO SERVING THE CHILDREN OF FLORIDA WITH YOUR GOVERNOR'S APPOINTMENT TO COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION, TO BEING THIS COMMISSION'S LEADING VOICE AND ADVOCATE FOR THE LESS FORTUNATE AND LESS PRIVILEGED MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY, WHERE DO I BEGIN?**

**WELL, MAYBE THIS WAY.**

**THERE'S AN INTERESTING QUESTION THAT IS ASKED WHEN A CITY IS DOING WELL. IT'S A QUESTION THAT'S BEEN DEBATED BY ECONOMISTS AND SOCIOLOGISTS FOR YEARS. HOW CAN EVERYONE THAT LIVES IN THE CITY RIDE ALONG WITH THE GOOD TIMES. IT**

**DOESN'T ALWAYS HAPPEN. MATTI, ALONG WITH SO MANY OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS, HAS SPENT HER YEARS AS AN ACTIVIST AND AS A COMMISSIONER, TRYING VERY HARD TO BRING AS MANY ON BOARD AS SHE CAN. AS YOUR MAYOR, I'M PROUD TO SHARE THE DAIS WITH MATTI.**

**AND IT SHOULDN'T COME AS A SURPRISE TO ANYONE THAT MATTI HAS JUST BEEN SELECTED AS ONE OF THE 24 WOMEN HONORED AT THE 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL "IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN" AWARDS BY MIAMI-DADE COUNTY. CONGRATULATIONS MATTI. A WELL DESERVED HONOR.**

**I BEGAN THE STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS BY TELLING ALL OF YOU WHAT AN HONOR AND PRIVILEGE IT IS TO SERVE AS YOUR MAYOR. THAT HONOR AND PRIVILEGE HAS IN RECENT WEEKS BEEN JOINED WITH A NEW SENSE OF PRIDE THAT IS SOMEWHAT HUMBLING. AND THOSE OF YOU WHO REALLY KNOW ME, ADMITTING TO ANY LEVEL OF "HUMBLE" IS QUITE AN ACHIEVEMENT, BUT ITS TRULY HOW I FEEL ABOUT TWO RECENT EVENTS.**

**THE FIRST IS LAST MONTH'S SETTLEMENT OF A TWO-DECADE LONG DISPUTE AND LEGAL ENTANGLEMENT INVOLVING A NUMBER OF RATHER COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT ISSUES SOUTH OF 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET. IT WAS A SERIES OF PROBLEMS THAT COMMISSIONERS JOSE SMITH, SIMON CRUZ AND I INHERITED WITH OUR FIRST ELECTION TO THE COMMISSION BACK IN 1997.**

**TO TAKE US THROUGH ITS HISTORY, WELL, THAT WOULD BE ANOTHER FULL DAY, SO LET'S JUST BRIEFLY TOUCH ON WHERE WE ARE. AFTER MORE THAN TWENTY YEARS OF LITIGATION AND DISPUTE, WE'VE FINALLY PUT IT BEHIND US AND, QUITE FRANKLY, ITS RESOLUTION TO THIS POINT HAS BEEN FAR MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE CITY THAN ANYONE MIGHT HAVE EXPECTED.**

**THE REAL BEGINNING OF THE SETTLEMENT STARTED WITH A CITIZEN IDEA IN 1996, WHICH LED TO A CITIZEN INITIATIVE IN 1997 CALLED SAVE MIAMI BEACH. FOLLOWING THAT WIN AT THE POLLS AGAINST EXTRAORDINARY ODDS, JOSE, SIMON AND MYSELF WERE ELECTED TO THE COMMISSION.**

**FOR THE NEXT SIX AND A HALF YEARS, IT WAS OUR CHALLENGE, AND ALSO FOR THE REST OF THE COMMISSIONERS, AS THEY WERE ELECTED, TO BRING THE LAND USE ISSUES SOUTH OF 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET TO RESOLUTION. THERE WAS A LOT OF BACK AND FORTH ON A VERY COMPLEX DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY AND DEVELOPERS THAT NEEDED TO BE WORKED OUT.**

**JOSE NEVER GAVE UP. HIS SKILL AS A RESPECTED ATTORNEY, ALONG WITH OUR LEGAL DEPARTMENT, CONTINUED TO MOVE AND KEEP ALIVE THE POSSIBILITIES OF REACHING A POSITIVE END-RESULT WITH THE DEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT, ONE THAT WOULD ALLOW US TO WIN THE COVETED ALASKA PARCEL, THE GEM PROPERTY IN SOUTH POINTE.**

**IN 2001 THE VOTERS ELECTED SAUL GROSS TO THIS COMMISSION. LONG A MEMBER OF THE CITY'S LAND USE BOARDS AND A HIGHLY RESPECTED PROFESSIONAL IN THE REAL ESTATE INDUSTRY, THIS COMMISSION APPOINTED SAUL TO LIAISON WITH THE DEVELOPERS.**

**THIS COMMISSION PLACED ITS CONFIDENCE AND TRUST IN SAUL, AND THAT HIS EXPERTISE IN LAND USE AND ZONING ISSUES WOULD TIE UP THE LOOSE ENDS AND BRING US A GOOD SETTLEMENT, ONE THAT ALL OF US COULD UNDERSTAND, WHICH IN ITSELF IS NO SMALL TASK.**

**SAUL NOT ONLY SUCCEEDED IN THAT TASK FOR THE CITY, HE EVEN HAD THE DEVELOPERS IN FULL AGREEMENT.**

**ON A PERSONAL NOTE, I WANT TO THANK SAUL FOR ALL OF HIS FINE WORK THAT HAS BROUGHT TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION WHAT BEGAN IN 1997 AS A CITIZEN INITIATIVE. WE'VE COME FULL CIRCLE AND WE'VE ALSO WON THE ALASKA PARCEL.**

**LET'S ALSO CREDIT THE MANAGER AND CHRISTINA CUERVO, MURRAY DUBBIN AND JORGE GOMEZ. IT'S BEEN A STRONG TEAM. BUT LET'S NOT FORGET THE CITIZEN INITIATIVE AND THE RESIDENTS WHO WERE THERE FROM THE BEGINNING.**

**IT BEGAN WITH MARK NEEDLE, KENT HARRISON ROBBINS, ILONA WISS, CHARLES SCHAAB, ERIKA BRIGHAM, GIL ZRINY, BEA KALSTEIN, MIKE BURKE, RICHARD ROSICHAN AND SO MANY OTHERS.**

**BUT LET'S ALSO GIVE SOME CREDIT TO THE OTHER SIDE, THE DEVELOPERS' ATTORNEYS, WHO IN REPRESENTING THEIR CLIENT'S INTERESTS, HAVE MADE THIS A MOST INTERESTING ADVENTURE.**

**WHAT HAD BEEN FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS A HIGHLY CONTENTIOUS BATTLE, HAS NOW BECOME A JOINT PUBLIC/PRIVATE EFFORT TO RESOLVE ALL OF THE REMAINING ISSUES WITH CONSENSUS AND HARMONY.**

**I PROMISED IN MY FIRST MAYORAL CAMPAIGN TO BRING PEOPLE TOGETHER, SO THANK YOU CLIFF SCHULMAN AND MATT GORSEN, FOR HELPING TO DELIVER ON THAT CAMPAIGN PROMISE.**

**WE'VE COME A LONG WAY IN THIS CITY. NOW LET'S ALL MOVE FORWARD AND MAKE SOUTH POINTE ONE OF THE MOST DESIRABLE AND BEAUTIFUL RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS IN ALL OF SOUTH FLORIDA.**

**THE SECOND HUMBLING EXPERINECE, IF YOU WILL, STEMS FROM THE MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup> SPECIAL ELECTION. I AM SO PROUD OF THE FULL SUPPORT OF THIS COMMISSION IN AGREEING TO PLACE ON THE BALLOT THE TWO CHARTER AMENDMENT QUESTIONS RELATING TO ZONING AND PUBLIC LAND. THE VOTERS ALSO AGREED.**

**YOU'VE ALL HEARD AND READ ABOUT THIS GREAT WIN OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF WEEKS, BUT I JUST WANTED TO TAKE A MOMENT TO CONGRATULATE THE RESIDENTS WHO VOTED FOR A MORE LIVABLE CITY.**

**THE RESULT OF YOUR VOTE WAS AN OVERWHELMING VICTORY FOR MIAMI BEACH, FOR THE FUTURE OF THE CITY, AND I CAN'T TELL YOU HOW PROUD I AM TO BE YOUR MAYOR WHEN OUR CHARTER WAS AMENDED TO INCLUDE THESE TWO VERY IMPORTANT GOOD GOVERNMENT MEASURES.**

**AND TO THE COMMISSION, TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOU, YOUR SUPPORT IN GIVING THE VOTERS THE OPPORTUNITY TO WEIGH IN ON THE FUTURE LIVABILITY OF OUR HOMETOWN, WAS THE RIGHT DECISION. A GOOD DECISION. AND WE CAN ALL CELEBRATE A GREAT VICTORY. IN FACT, CITIES ACROSS THE STATE ARE LOOKING TO EMULATE MIAMI BEACH IN ENSURING GOOD PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE.**

**THERE ARE A FEW PEOPLE WHO DESERVE SPECIAL THANKS FOR THEIR EFFORTS IN STRUCTURING THESE VERY POSITIVE AND PROGRESSIVE AMENDMENTS WHICH ALLOW OUR RESIDENTS TO HAVE FINAL SAY ON INCREASES IN ZONING DENSITY. CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE CHAIR STEVE ZACK AND MEMBERS: RICKY ARRIOLA, ABRAHAM LAESER, LARRY HERRUP, FORMER MAYOR, SEYMOUR GELBER, JOHNATHAN BELLOFF, AND CITY ATTORNEY JEAN OLIN. AND OF COURSE THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE FAMOUS QUESTIONS 2 AND 3, MY GOOD FRIEND VICTOR DIAZ.**

**PRIOR TO THE ELECTION, VICTOR AND I DID A LITTLE POLITICKING ON THIS ONE, MOSTLY, TO FEND OFF SOME OF THE**

**MISINFORMATION AND CONFUSION THAT THE OPPONENTS WERE SPINNING AROUND TOWN. VICTOR, WHAT CAN I SAY, OTHER THAN TO ASK EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM TO JOIN ME IN A PERSONAL THANKS AND A WELL DESERVED ROUND OF APPLAUSE.**

**THE VOTERS ALSO OVERWHELMING ADOPTED A QUESTION THAT WILL ALLOW THE PEOPLE TO HAVE THE FINAL SAY ON OUR FIVE MAJOR PARCELS OF PUBLIC LAND AND REQUIRE A SUPER MAJORITY VOTE OF THE COMMISSION FOR ANY SALE, TRANSFER OR LONG TERM LEASE OF THE REMAINING PARCELS OF PUBLIC LAND. THIS IS AN INCREDIBLY IMPORTANT AMENDMENT WHICH WILL PRESERVE PUBLIC LAND FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.**

**THERE WAS ANOTHER QUESTION ON THE BALLOT, ONE THAT WAS ALSO APPROVED BY THE VOTERS AND WILL NOW BECOME A PART OF THE CHARTER. VERY SIMPLY, IT REQUIRES THE COMMISSION TO CONSIDER THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC IMPACT OF ITS LEGISLATIVE ACTS.**

**ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SOME EDITORIALIZING AGAINST IT, THE VOTERS OVERWHELMINGLY APPROVED THE QUESTION. IT'S A GOOD IDEA AND A SENSIBLE APPROACH TO SOME OF WHAT WE DO AT THE DAIS. IT IS IMPORTANT TO FULLY CONSIDER THE LONG-TERM ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL IMPACT OF LEGISLATIVE ACTS.**

**I WANT TO RECOGNIZE AND COMMEND COMMISSIONER SIMON CRUZ FOR FIRST RAISING THIS IMPORTANT ISSUE. BACK IN 1997 WHEN**

**SIMON, JOSE AND MYSELF WERE FIRST ELECTED, WE WERE ALL LEARNING ABOUT THE BUDGET PROCESS WITH ITS MYRIAD OF SPENDING RESTRICTIONS, PRIORITIES AND HOW THOSE DECISIONS WOULD IMPACT THE CITY'S FUTURE.**

**AS JOSE AND SIMON WILL LIKELY AGREE, WE LEARNED TOGETHER HOW SOME FUNDING DECISIONS WITHIN THE PUBLIC SECTOR CAN BE A LITTLE DIFFERENT THAN WHAT WE UNDERSTOOD WITHIN THE PRIVATE SECTOR. SO BACK IN 1997, 98 AND 99, SIMON PUT FORWARD A GOOD IDEA, AN IDEA THAT'S NOT ALWAYS CONSIDERED BY GOVERNMENT.**

**SIMON BASICALLY SAID: HOW IS THIS DECISION WE ARE MAKING TODAY, WHETHER IN THE BUDGET OR ON A SEPARATE ISSUE, GOING TO AFFECT US DOWN THE ROAD? FOR A FEW YEARS, SIMON ASKED THAT QUESTION, AND AS SLOWLY AS GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO MOVE AT TIMES, IT TOOK AWHILE FOR THAT QUESTION TO BE ADDRESSED.**

**AND ALTHOUGH HE MAY NOT BE OUT THERE SEEKING CREDIT, THAT CHARTER QUESTION THAT WAS APPROVED ON MARCH 9<sup>TH</sup> REALLY BELONGS TO SIMON. HE GOT EARLY ON WHAT TOOK MANY OF US A LITTLE WHILE LONGER TO GET. CONGRATULATIONS SIMON, YOU DESERVE A HAND.**

**I WOULD LIKE TO CONGRATULATE THE MANAGER AND BOTH THE POLICE AND FIRE UNION LEADERSHIP FOR REACHING GOOD AND**

**FAIR CONTRACTS, BOTH RATIFIED A COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO BY THE COMMISSION.**

**SINCE I HAVE BEEN THE MAYOR, IT'S BEEN THE SENTIMENT OF THIS COMMISSION THAT PUBLIC SAFETY IN OUR CITY BE OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY. WE ALL MUST STRIVE TO MAKE MIAMI BEACH THE SAFEST HOMETOWN FOR OUR RESIDENTS AND THE SAFEST DESTINATION FOR OUR VISITORS.**

**WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SOME CONTROVERSY OF LATE, AS THE MAYOR OF MIAMI BEACH I WANT TO SEND A VERY STRONG MESSAGE TO OUR POLICE DEPARTMENT. A MESSAGE THAT'S LOUD AND CLEAR. YOU HAVE MY SUPPORT AND CONFIDENCE 100 PERCENT.**

**I AM WELL AWARE OF THE STRAIN ON YOUR BUDGET AS IT RELATES TO THE OVERWHELMING TASK OF POLICING A CITY THAT DOUBLES AND TRIPLES ITS POPULATION ON A NEAR WEEKLY BASIS. AND ALSO THE ADDED STRESS OF HAVING TO DEAL WITH HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF VISITORS DURING CERTAIN SPECIAL EVENTS AND HOLIDAYS.**

**AS A FORMER PROSECUTOR, I KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DEALING WITH. AS THE MAYOR, AND I BELIEVE WITH THE COMMISSION'S SUPPORT AS WELL, WE WILL FIND THE APPROPRIATE FUNDING SOURCE TO OFFSET THAT STRAIN ON YOUR BUDGET. YOU ARE DOING A GREAT JOB, BUT AS A COMMISSION, WE WILL NEED TO ADDRESS**

**YOUR FUNDING ISSUES TO ALLOW YOU TO CONTINUE AT THAT HIGH LEVEL. THERE IS NO GREATER PRIORITY.**

**TO OUR HARD WORKING FIREFIGHTERS, AT LONG LAST WE'RE WELL ON OUR WAY TO COMPLETING THE TWO NEW FIREHOUSES THAT YOU SO DESERVE AND THE CITY DESERVES.**

**MIAMI BEACH'S PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS CONTINUE TO SERVE THE RESIDENTS WITH A HIGH LEVEL OF PROFESSIONALISM. EACH YEAR, THEY CONTINUE TO PROGRESS WITH EXPANDING TECHNOLOGY AND IMPROVED TRAINING.**

**IT HAS BECOME A TRADITION FOR ME TO ACKNOWLEDGE A PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER'S ACHIEVEMENTS FROM EACH DEPARTMENT DURING THE STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS.**

**I THINK IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT OUR PUBLIC SAFETY DEPARTMENTS NOT ONLY CONTINUE TO IMPROVE, BUT THEY ARE ALSO ACTIVE IN CHARITABLE EVENTS ORGANIZED BY MY OFFICE AND IN THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.**

**WE'LL BEGIN WITH FIRE FIGHTER OF THE YEAR.**

**LEIUTENANT TIM HOWARTH OF THE MIAMI BEACH FIRE DEPARTMENT PLEASE RISE.**

**YOU ARE BEING HONORED TODAY FOR LEADERSHIP WHEN RESPONDING TO AN EXPLOSION ON THE NORWAY CRUISE LINER. LT.**

**HOWARTH ASSEMBLED A TASK FORCE OF UNITS AND SENT THEM TO THE COAST GUARD BASE FOR TRANSPORT TO THE PORT.**

**HE SERVED AS THE DEPARTMENT'S REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNIFIED COMMAND POST...**

**HE DIRECTED THE EXTRICATION, TREATMENT AND TRANSPORT OF CRITICALLY BURNED PATIENTS ABOARD THE SHIP. HIS SUPERVISORS ALL THE WAY UP THE CHAIN OF COMMAND HAVE SAID THAT IF NOT FOR HIS POIGNANT DECISION MAKING, MANY OF THOSE VICTIMS ON THE SHIP THAT DAY, MAY NOT HAVE SURVIVED.**

**WE ARE PROUD OF YOU. CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ON THIS DAY WHEN WE TAKE TIME TO HONOR THOSE WHO MAKE OUR COMMUNITY SAFE.**

**ONTO THE MIAMI BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT. CHARLES WEISS, PLEASE RISE. A K-9 OFFICER, OFFICER WEISS RECEIVED ELEVEN LETTERS OF COMMENDATION THIS YEAR FOR HIS EXCEPTIONAL JOB PERFORMANCE.**

**THOSE LETTERS STEM PRIMARILY FROM HIS INVOLVEMENT IN NABBING SEVERAL VIOLENT CRIMINAL OFFENDERS. HE WAS RECOGNIZED WITHIN THE MIAMI BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT FOR ARRESTING 3 BURGLARY SUSPECTS, 2 ARMED ROBBERY SUSPECTS, A SHOOTING SUSPECT, A WANTED FUGITIVE FROM MINNESOTA, A SEXUAL BATTERY SUSPECT AND A SUSPECT WANTED FOR THREATENING ELDERLY CITIZENS WITH A FIREARM.**

**HIS RECORD SPEAKS FOR ITSELF.... CONGRATULATIONS OFFICER WEISS.**

**ONTO THE BEACH PATROL.... AN ESSENTIAL PART OF OUR COMMUNITY AS THEY PATROL A TREASURE OF OUR COMMUNITY.... OUR BEACHES.**

**FOR LIFEGUARD OF THE YEAR: CHARLES ELLIS IS A 16 YEAR VETERAN. CHARLES PERFORMED A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT RESCUE ON THE BEACH AT 30<sup>TH</sup> STREET... A PLACE WHERE THE ROCKS ARE VERY DENSE AND SHARP, MAKING BOTH SWIMMING AND RESCUES-- INCREDIBLY RISKY. IT WAS THERE THAT A LOCAL WOMAN NEARLY DROWNED.**

**CHARLES'S SWIFT RESPONSE AND INNATE BRAVERY SAVED THIS YOUNG MOTHER'S LIFE.**

**SHE--- SUFFERED NO INJURIES. BUT CHARLES DID. ACCORDING TO HIS CAPTAIN, CHARLES' SEVERE LASCERATIONS DID NOT FAZE HIM. AND IT IS HIS OVERALL WORK ETHIC-- ON AND OFF THE BEACH--- THAT MAKES HIM OUR HONOREE. CONGRATULATIONS CHARLES FOR BEING LIEFGUARD OF THE YEAR.**

**AS WE MOVE INTO 2004, I AM COMMITTED TO MAINTAINING THE HIGHEST AND STRONGEST LEVEL OF SUPPORT TOWARD ALL HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. THIS CITY, WHICH HAS BEEN A LEADER IN PUSHING FORWARD AND DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF THE GAY AND LESBIAN**

**COMMUNITY, WILL NEVER STEP BACK OR SHY AWAY FROM THAT POSITION. NOT WHILE I'M THE MAYOR.**

**IN RECENT WEEKS, SAVE-DADE HAS BROUGHT TO THE CITY THREE INITIATIVES TO BE ADDED TO OUR EXISTING HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE. THOSE INITIATIVES ARE CURRENTLY MOVING THROUGH OUR COMMITTEE PROCESS. I WOULD URGE THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, WHO ARE SUPPORTING THE INITIATIVES, LUIS GARCIA, RICHARD STEINBERG AND SAUL GROSS IN PARTICULAR, TO BRING TO THE FULL COMMISSION A POSITIVE RECOMMENDATION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.**

**MIAMI BEACH HAS BEEN AND WILL CONTINUE TO BE, A CITY THAT LEADS, AND WE WILL REMAIN IN THE FOREFRONT OF MOVING HUMAN RIGHTS LEGISLATION FORWARD. I WOULD LIKE TO THANK AND COMMEND SAVE-DADE'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HEDDY PENA FOR HER DEDICATION AND LEADERSHIP. I AM ONE HUNDRED PERCENT IN SUPPORT OF EXPANDING AND STRENGTHENING OUR HUMAN RIGHTS ORDINANCE.**

**AND TO THE FAMILIES IN NORTH BEACH, IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS, WE'LL BE HAVING THE GRAND OPENING OF THE NEW YOUTH CENTER AND SURROUNDING BALL FIELDS. IN A RECENT TOUR OF THE FACILITY WITH THE CHAIRMAN OF THE YOUTH CENTER'S OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE, JOE FONTANA, I GOT TO TELL YOU, FOR A**

**CITY OUR SIZE WE CAN ALL BE PROUD OF THE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES THAT WE NOW HAVE.**

**THE NEW YOUTH CENTER IS GOING TO BE A WONDERFUL AMENITY FOR THE FAMILIES IN NORTH BEACH. THANKS FOR YOUR HARD WORK, JOE. AND THANKS TO THE CIP OFFICE, TIM HEMSTREET, AND OF COURSE TO THE ADMINISTRATION AND COMMISSION FOR BRINGING THIS WONDERFUL FACILITY TO FRUITION.**

**AT OUR LAST MEETING EARLIER THIS MONTH, A SECTION OF NORTH BEACH WAS DESIGNATED A HISTORIC DISTRICT. THIS COMMISSION'S COMMITMENT TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION CONTINUES, AND WE CAN ALL BE VERY PROUD.**

**THERE'S SOMETHING RATHER TIMELY ABOUT THIS YEAR'S STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS. THIS PAST WEEK HAS BEEN QUITE AN EYE OPENER FOR ME. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT THE CITY'S SUCCESSES, AND NO ONE IS QUESTIONING THAT. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT OUR BOOMING TOURISM, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES FROM NORTH BEACH TO SOUTH POINTE. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT HUNDREDS OF MILLION OF DOLLARS IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS. JUST ABOUT EVERY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD WILL BE BETTER OFF FROM THE 1999 VOTER APPROVED GO BOND FUNDED PROJECTS.**

**BUT I'VE ALSO LEARNED SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT THIS WEEK. IT BEGAN ON MONDAY WITH THE MAYOR ON THE MOVE**

**PROGRAM, WHERE A COUPLE OF HUNDRED RESIDENTS WERE GATHERED TO DISCUSS QUALITY OF LIFE ISSUES. AT TUESDAY'S NINE HOUR PLANNING BOARD MEETING DOZENS OF RESIDENTS FROM SOUTH POINTE WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE.**

**AND I THINK IT'S FAIR TO SAY, THAT WHILE WE'VE BEEN TOOTING OUR HORN ON THE FINANCIAL SECURITY WE'VE BUILT, AND WE HAVE, MAYBE, JUST MAYBE... WE HAVEN'T CONSIDERED ALL OF THE IMPACTS OF THIS SUCCESS UPON ALL OF OUR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.**

**WHAT WE ALL NEED TO DO, AND I AM NOT AFRAID TO SAY-- THAT WE HAVE TO DO BETTER, IS TO FIND A MORE COMPREHENSIVE WAY TO PRESERVE RESIDENT QUALITY OF LIFE. IT'S ABOUT TIME OUR RESIDENTS' CONCERNS BE OUR FIRST PRIORITY.**

**I WOULD LIKE TO ASK OUR VERY FINE PLANNING DIRECTOR, JORGE GOMEZ, WHO I HAVE A LOT OF RESPECT FOR, TO TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE LOOK AT EVERY RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOOD, EVEN IF IT'S JUST A SINGLE BUILDING, AT HOW IT'S BEING IMPACTED BY THE BREAKNECK SPEED OF TODAY'S DEVELOPMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT, FROM CONDITIONAL USES TO ENFORCEMENT.**

**I AM ALSO REQUESTING THAT THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING BOARD, VICTOR DIAZ, CO-HOST THIS INITIATIVE. THE MAYOR'S OFFICE WILL ALSO TRY TO TAP INTO ANY NUMBER OF**

**PLANNERS THAT LIVE IN THE CITY, AND ASK THEM TO VOLUNTEER THEIR TALENT AND SKILL IN HELPING US SHAPE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE LAND USE AND ZONING MAP WITH THE GOAL OF PRESERVING OUR RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.**

**I KNOW WE CAN DO THIS. WE CAN DO IT WITH TOWN HALL MEETINGS FROM NORTH BEACH TO SOUTH POINTE. RATHER THAN REACTING AND BEING ON THE DEFENSIVE TO TRY AND CURE PROBLEMS, LET'S TAKE THE OFFENSIVE AND FIND A WAY TO BETTER PLAN OUR FUTURE.**

**THERE'S NO ONE TO BLAME. OUR CITY HAS CHANGED SO DRAMATICALLY IN JUST THE PAST FEW YEARS, WHAT MAY HAVE SEEMED THE RIGHT DIRECTION THEN, MAY NOW BE DIFFERENT. WE ARE ALL PART OF A CITY THAT'S CHANGING RIGHT IN FRONT OF US. THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO ASSESS JUST WHAT KIND OF CITY WE WANT TO BE.**

**I WOULD ASK JORGE GOMEZ, THE MANAGER, AND VICTOR DIAZ TO CONSIDER LEADING THIS CITYWIDE INITIATIVE. I'M GOING TO CALL A SPECIAL CITY COMMISSION MEETING IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS TO ASK MY COLLEAGUES TO JOIN THIS EFFORT. I AM CALLING ON EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION AND GROUP TO ATTEND THE MEETING TO BEGIN DEVELOPING A PROPER PLAN. IF WE ALL SET OUR MINDS ON THIS PRIORITY AND WORK TOGETHER WE WILL HAVE AN EVEN BETTER MIAMI BEACH.**

**IN CLOSING, I WOULD LIKE TO TAKE A MOMENT TO THANK ALL  
OF THE COMMISSION AIDES AND SECRETARIES, MY PERSONAL STAFF,  
LIZ, JOSE, FRANCIS, AND OF COURSE ALL OF THE RESIDENTS AND  
BUSINESSES WHO HAVE ELEVATED THIS COMMISSION TO ITS  
CURRENT LEVEL OF UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS.**

**GOD BLESS MIAMI BEACH, GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA, AND ALL OF THE MEN AND WOMEN OF THE UNITED STATES  
MILITARY, HERE AT HOME AND ACROSS THE SEA, WHO ARE  
PROTECTING US IN THE WAR AGAINST TERRORISM.**